

LORD READING SAYS BRITONS WILL DIE BEFORE THEY LET ENEMY PASS

TWELVE DIVISIONS IN ATTACK ON ROYE

Germans Employed Their Best Forces in Attempt to Break British Right.

LINE ONCE NEARLY CUT

French Troops Arrived, However, and Speedily Fed Into Haig's Columns.

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LONDON, March 27.—(Pictorial) Phillips in the Daily Express gives a spirited account of Tuesday's fighting, indicating that the chief German attack developed between Hattencourt and Roye. Twelve of the best German divisions, including fresh Brandenburgers, were pressed forward heavily at Roye.

Slightly further to the north the Germans were attacking with less vigor in the region around Dompiere, where the British gained some ground, while pushing steadily against Bray, Meulotte and Albert.

West of Hapauine they advanced somewhat up to noon yesterday, but there had not been any heavy fighting in this region. Everywhere a rearrangement of the front was going on. The movement of equipment was carried out in perfect order without the slightest sign of hurriedness.

150 Airplanes Brought Down.

Many British airplanes were soaring over the sunlit fields and practically none of the enemy's machines were up. The enemy had seen his airmen severely punished since the beginning of the battle. One one part of the British front alone 150 German airplanes were brought down.

This five days' test of the British soldiers is the greatest ever imposed upon troops in a field. Many stood nobly against odds and showed unflinching courage.

Details of the recent fighting north of Hapauine before the British line showed the Lancashire and Yorkshire troops chiefly concerned.

There was a critical situation at Evillers, where the Germans made repeated attempts to break through the British line. Work around by Hattencourt by sending troops by way of Mory in an effort thus to cut off the British forces to the north of Evillers.

Fresh Troops Employed.

Three fresh German battalions, including the Ninety-first Reserve Infantry Regiment, were employed in the Sunday night attacks on Evillers. They were thrown back by a vigorous counter attack and the line was restored.

Monday morning three battalions of the Seventy-seventh Regiment, Second Guard Reserve Division, were ordered to try again, and at the same time the enemy launched an even more powerful blow between Hattencourt and Hapauine. The latter, however, was held stoutly checked, but some of the German troops got a footing in Evillers. Reserves were sent up to Evillers, which was again saved.

Gomlecourt was repeatedly approached by small parties of German infantry. The pressure on all the British line was steadily maintained, and at Gomlecourt the British were driven to distance and prepared to move again in the morning to their new line. It was a delicate operation withdrawing them without loss, for at the end of the day's fighting their left flank was exposed near Gomlecourt, but the enemy was obviously exhausted by his efforts and did not press forward.

Hard fighting on both sides of Roye again delayed the "arrowhead" formations thrusting against the British defensive screen.

The following is a general account of the operations in this region which preceded Tuesday's attack:

On Saturday night the Germans held the bridgehead between Pithon and Ham. The situation became intense when they occupied Esmer, Cash and Hattencourt. The British withdrew to a line on the canal between Betencourt and Ollevy. On Sunday the Germans attacked heavily at Voyenne to win the neighboring bridges so that they could bring up their troops with more speed in greater numbers.

After heavy fighting at Roye the British fell back. Thus Sunday night the British line ran from Meulotte to Roye to Pithon along the Lieumont Canal to Buvierches, Elie, Melot, La Bassa, north of Villeneuve up to Ollevy. It was a dangerous line and could not be held for any considerable length of time by the troops then at our disposal.

Fortunately, the French divisions which then began arriving helped to restore the situation. They were fed into the British division so the soldiers of the two countries were intermingled in the fighting.

When the Brandenburgers succeeded in crossing the Somme they kept closing in on Nesle from the north side without attempting an entrance by frontal attack. The Germans made a heavy attack at Maroilles, breaking a gap in the British line. In the evening the British again fell back.

Although very little artillery fire has been experienced in some regions, notably northwest of Hapauine, it is evident that the enemy's progress is largely due to the rapid advance of his heavy guns. In the fighting around Hattencourt and Roye yesterday heavy howitzers of large calibre were employed.

Another reason given for the rapid advance is the excellence of the German non-commissioned officers, who march their men together. Undoubtedly many of the attacking troops are traversing familiar ground, but there are also troops which it is believed are passing across the Somme for the first time. Their maps are good and the men have been plentifully supplied with them.

It is interesting to note that none of the German objectives marked on any of the maps has been attained on time. Thus Achiet le Petit was the first day's objective for some of the troops who came pushing out of the Hindenburg line in the Quenest sector. This goal had not been achieved up to Monday noon.

Gen. von Blomberg Killed.

AMSTERDAM, March 27.—German newspapers announce that Gen. Paul Blomberg, an infantry division commander in the German army, was killed at the front on March 23.

Heads British Farming Board.

LONDON, March 27.—Viscount Goschen, a Conservative, has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Agriculture. He succeeds the Duke of Marlborough, who resigned on March 20.

READING CALLS ON U. S. TO HURRY UP

Continued from First Page.

elsewhere near him they sat other men with them in their heads and a gift of language to express them, Col. George B. Harvey, President John Drier Hibben of Princeton University and Frank R. Lawrence, president of the Lotus, whose flexible eloquence has so often served to interpret American appreciation of notable visitors.

Mr. Lawrence's Welcome.

The event was so remarkable (it presaged happenings so important, that they as they would the Lotus folk could not find room for all of their members that sought seating room in the banquet hall. The number was limited to 400. When the time came President Lawrence, after a simple dinner had been served, welcomed Lord Reading, saying among other potent things:

"There was a time, down to about a year ago, when we felt bound to tolerate such expressions as 'pro-German' or 'pro-Allies' as indicating the attitude of individuals toward the war; but the moment the Congress of the United States, under the leadership of our President, decided that we should enter the war the time for such talk and water terms passed by, though we still sometimes hear them used.

"Today every man or woman owing allegiance to the United States is either an American or a traitor.

"There is no middle ground, and the more swiftly and sternly this fact is recognized and given full effect the better it will be for us all."

"Let us lay aside everything, forget everything but the one stupendous task of winning the war, concentrate upon that, put into it every ounce of strength we possess, every man we can muster, every ship we can build, every pound of munitions or of food that we can supply, and let us lose not a minute in doing it."

Goes to Heart of Subject.

The club rose to the Ambassador, cheered him for a minute or more, seated him with marks and studied the dark stern face. He began to speak in a voice unusually low. He thanked them for the character of his welcome. He said that he had no intention of being perplexed by an Ambassador's encounter in essaying oratory. But he wasted little or no time in coming to the heart of his thoughts—the thoughts that weighed heavily upon him, as he perceived, upon the Americans in his audience. He said then:

"It is well, Mr. President, that we should face facts. I do not believe that either you in this country or we in ours are ever the worst off for knowing the facts, even though they may be unpleasant. The facts are that we are in a perilous position, and the only way to escape it is by a united effort of all the peoples of the world."

"We have had an enemy who has concentrated his attacks upon our forces with the object of driving us to a surrender of large bodies of our troops and to break our lines so as to compel on our part the acceptance of a peace at the dictation of Germany."

"The attacks have been heavy; we have been driven from positions which we held. The enemy has been enabled, by the aid of troops and aircraft, to break through our lines, and he has got not only from there but also from Austria, all along that part of the line which was held by the British troops. Heeds of valor have been done, feats of prodigious valor have been accomplished daily. Many of them, alas, must remain unrecorded, but in the end the only will be written which will, I firmly believe, prove the record of one of the glorious chapters of British arms."

[Great applause.]

Forced Back by Weight.

"Our men have been compelled to give ground in consequence of sheer weight of numbers of men and guns. I read the stories that are daily appearing in your press which will show some of the deeds which our people have been called upon to perform. I am not going to enumerate them, for the best of all reasons, that I know not the details; they have not yet been chronicled."

"But I do know this, and I have no hesitation in saying it to you, speaking as I do as an Englishman and as a representative of my nation, that we have withstood the attacks of the enemy; that we have held our line under circumstances which may well redound to the credit of any nation which may be called upon to submit to such attacks."

"In particular, what has held our people together is the dogged determination, the grim tenacity of our people. When speaking of it I will, if I may, read to you a message which I have received by telegram to-day from Mr. Lloyd George, our Prime Minister, to me, with the intention that I should read it to you and through you to Americans."

He read, with the eloquent ability of the trained and facile orator, although he was apparently enough that he sought for no artificial effect, his intensity of feeling being what it was, the cablegram just received by him from the British Premier, the acquisition of temporary defeat, the news that the French were pouring into the battle, the promise of resolute defence to the end and the final appeal for quick American aid.

It is impossible to put into mere words the scene that followed. Men's minds were torn between the two emotions of pride in British accomplishments and the fear of the disaster that might ensue should America fail to help. But heavy cheering assailed the walls of the room and lasted for minutes. It was a scene, the Lord Reading could continue. Presently he resumed:

"Mr. President, possibly it is difficult for you and the members of this club, and indeed the American people, with all your sympathy and with all your sensitiveness to understand exactly the feelings of us who have been in this war so long, who have lost many of our men, who have suffered in the same way and who are all anxious at the present moment as to the lives of those who are doing battle on the front at this moment."

"You Will Do Your Duty."

"It is difficult indeed to picture to yourselves what all this means to us; but you are about to learn it. You have your own troops now in France, you are sending constantly more and more troops, you are taking your part in the line. You are preparing now for any onslaught which may be made upon you. You will have to go through the same kind of suffering which we have had to endure. You will not shrink from it, as we have not shrunk from it; you will

not flinch from sacrifice as we have not flinched from it. You will do your duty—I believe in my innermost heart—as we have tried to do ours. [Applause.]

"I am not minded, Mr. President, and I could not if I tried—to speak to you to-night in the ordinary manner of an after-dinner speaker. I do not believe it was your intention when you invited me to be present this evening. You did not expect that I should tell you humorous stories, you did not want me to say anything in the nature of an after-dinner speech. I believe that you wanted to hear from me as the representative of a country which is fighting in the same cause as yourselves, something of what was happening over there in France, where our fortunes are engaged."

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Trumpet Call of Hope.

This trumpet call of hope sounded ringingly in the quiet of the room: "We, Mr. President, and you, if I may say so, when we consider the present situation, must be careful, nevertheless, that we do not overestimate the effect of withdrawals. In considering whether or not the enemy is successful, we must first of all look clearly in our minds what his aim is. That is, as you so very well know, to break through our line and consequently to crush all resistance. Nothing else is of real moment. If there is no breaking through, if the line is not broken, if the line still holds, then there is nothing vital that has been gained by the attack. [Applause.]

"And, indeed, what is of the utmost importance is that we should never forget to count the cost to the enemy of any success which he may have had. I notice that Gen. von Hindenburg has said that the first act is ended. There have been bell ringings, flag waving and decorations in Berlin. But those who are experienced in the theatre know that the simile is drawn would tell you that it is unwise to exchange congratulations until the curtain is rung down upon the last act. [Applause.]

"It is not the first success that matters so much; what matters is the end. You, President, have said in a message which was transmitted to him by Field Marshal Haig that he was confident, and I believe he spoke for the American people, in the ultimate victory. [Applause.]

"It is that ultimate victory which will be the final act, and it is then that will be the proper moment for the exchange of congratulations. [Applause.]

We are now being assisted, as appears from the Prime Minister's cablegram, by the French. We are fighting together with the French, and we are withstanding the shock of the hordes of Germans, driven across to our lines as comrades, indeed as brothers. For all their heroic and last few days' onslaughts, they are in sufficiently high terms. [Applause.]

will hold on to the end.

"And now, Mr. President, as this fight continues, let me remind you that there is that in the British people which you see so well, having, if I may be permitted to use to remind you, that the common ancestor of British stock—that when once they had made up their minds to fight, they had set their purpose, that they will hold on to the end, that they will never give way, and that in this particular instance there is the added force, the strength of which is difficult for me to gauge, that is, that they know that their cause is just. [Great applause.]

"Our men are, like yours, in the main not trained soldiers—men who were civilians, just as yours were, only a little while ago, and who did not think that they would ever be called upon to don a military uniform. All sections of the community joined us originally in volunteering their services, for we had only at a late stage that we had to have recourse to conscription. All sections of the community are now soldiers doing their share, and it is indeed one of the marvels of the day that I have never read the stories that are daily appearing in your press which will show some of the deeds which our people have been called upon to perform. I am not going to enumerate them, for the best of all reasons, that I know not the details; they have not yet been chronicled."

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